

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method for facilitating participation in a gaming activity that includes at least a standard gaming activity and at least one bonus activity, comprising:

receiving an indication to trade player assets for altering the odds of receiving at least one bonus activity without the trade affecting payout odds of the standard gaming activity;

receiving an identification of a trade value offered by the player, wherein the trade value comprises at least a portion of the player assets;

executing the trade by accepting the trade value offered by the player, and in response altering the odds for providing bonus activity to the player relative to odds for providing bonus activity to the player during the standard gaming activity; and

presenting the player with a chance to participate in the bonus activity at the altered odds.

2. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein altering the odds for providing bonus activity to the player comprises increasing the odds for providing bonus activity to the player relative to odds for providing bonus activity to the player during the standard gaming activity.

3. (Original) The method as in Claim 2, wherein presenting the player with a chance to participate in the bonus activity at the increased odds comprises presenting the player with a direct chance to participate in the bonus activity otherwise independent of the standard gaming activity.

4. (Original) The method as in Claim 2, wherein presenting the player with a chance to participate in the bonus activity at the increased odds comprises increasing the odds of reaching the bonus activity in connection with participation in the standard gaming activity.

5. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein receiving an indication to trade player assets comprises receiving a player request initiated by the player.

6. (Original) The method as in Claim 5, wherein receiving a player request initiated by the player comprises receiving a player request initiated by the player in response to a predetermined occurrence of the standard gaming activity.
7. (Original) The method as in Claim 5, wherein receiving a player request initiated by the player comprises receiving an unsolicited request by the player to trade player assets for the altered odds for participating in the bonus activity.
8. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein receiving an indication to trade player assets comprises receiving an automatic request initiated via the standard gaming activity upon an occurrence of one or more predetermined events.
9. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, further comprising presenting a selectable option to trade player assets for altered odds of participating in bonus activity, and wherein receiving an indication to trade player assets comprises receiving an indication of the option selected by the player.
10. (Original) The method as in Claim 9, wherein the selectable option is presented upon an occurrence of a predetermined gaming activity event of the standard gaming activity.
11. (Original) The method as in Claim 10, wherein the predetermined gaming activity event comprises a predetermined symbol combination in a slot game.
12. (Original) The method as in Claim 10, wherein the predetermined gaming activity event comprises a double-up feature associated with the standard gaming activity.
13. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, further comprising correlating the trade value with altered odds of an appropriate bonus event, and wherein presenting the player with a chance to participate in the bonus activity comprises providing a bonus event at the altered odds corresponding to the offered trade value to the player.

14. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein receiving an identification of a trade value comprises receiving a trade value identified by the player.

15. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein receiving an identification of a trade value comprises automatically receiving a predetermined trade value.

16. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, wherein the player assets include any one or more of credits presently subject to a winning payout, credits already accumulated through prior winning payouts, and credits accumulated through input of new player assets.

17. (Original) The method as in Claim 1, further comprising presenting a plurality of bonus activities to the player from which the player may select, and wherein presenting the player with a chance to participate in the bonus activity comprises presenting the player with a chance to participate in the selected bonus activity or activities.

18. (Currently amended) A method for facilitating participation in a gaming activity that includes at least a standard gaming activity and at least one bonus activity, comprising:

receiving an indication to trade player assets for an increased chance of being awarded a bonus activity relative to the chance of being awarded the bonus activity during participation in the standard gaming activity without the trade affecting payout odds of the standard gaming activity;

receiving an identification of a trade value offered by the player, wherein the trade value comprises at least a portion of the player assets; and

executing the trade by accepting the trade value offered by the player and presenting the player with the increased chance of being awarded the bonus activity.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein presenting the player with the increased chance of being awarded the bonus activity comprises presenting the player with a direct chance to participate in the bonus activity otherwise independent of participation in the standard gaming activity.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 19, wherein presenting the player with a direct chance to participate in the bonus activity comprises presenting the player with a direct chance having odds dependent on an amount of the trade value offered by the player.
21. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein presenting the player with the increased chance of being awarded the bonus activity comprises presenting the player with increased odds of reaching the bonus activity in connection with participation in the standard gaming activity.
22. (Original) The method of Claim 21, wherein presenting the player with increased odds of reaching the bonus activity comprises presenting the player with increased odds dependent on an amount of the trade value offered by the player.
23. (Original) The method of Claim 18, further comprising providing a payout result corresponding to a result of the player participation in the bonus activity.
24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, wherein providing a payout result comprises providing a winning payout result quantity dependent on the trade value offered by the player.
25. (Original) The method of Claim 23, wherein providing a payout result comprises providing winning payout results having a frequency dependent on the trade value offered by the player.
26. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein accepting the trade value offered by the player comprises accepting the trade value offered by the player if the trade value conforms to one or more trade acceptance rules.
27. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the standard gaming activity comprises a slot game comprising one or more slot game paylines.
28. (Currently amended) A method for participating in a gaming activity having at least a standard mode of play and a bonus mode of play, comprising:

participating in the standard mode of play and placing wagers in connection with the participation in the standard mode of play;

initiating a trade of gaming assets for an increase in the odds of engaging in at least one bonus event associated with the bonus mode, wherein the trade does not affect payout odds of the standard mode of play;

identifying a trade amount from the participant's gaming assets in which to trade for the increased odds of engaging in the bonus event;

surrendering the trade amount in return for receiving the increased odds of engaging in the bonus event.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 28, further comprising participating in the standard mode of play having the increased odds of engaging in the bonus event.

30. (Original) The method of Claim 28, further comprising being awarded the bonus event, and participating in the bonus event without resort to the standard mode of play.

31. (Original) The method as in Claim 30, further comprising returning to the standard mode of play upon completion of the participation in the bonus event.

32. (Original) The method as in Claim 28, wherein initiating a trade comprises initiating the trade in response to an invitation by the gaming activity to initiate the trade.

33. (Original) The method as in Claim 28, wherein initiating a trade comprises choosing to initiate the trade in response to presentation of a selectable option to engage in the trade.

34. (Original) The method as in Claim 33, further comprising happening upon a predetermined gaming result in the standard mode of play which in response presents the selectable option to engage in the trade.

35. (Original) The method as in Claim 28, wherein initiating a trade comprises initiating the trade of the participant's own volition.

36. (Original) The method as in Claim 28, further comprising selecting one of a plurality of selectable bonus events.

37. (Currently amended) A casino gaming apparatus hosting a gaming activity having at least a standard mode of play and a bonus mode of play, the casino gaming apparatus comprising:

a user interface to allow player input of a trade notification, while in the standard mode of play, to trade player assets for an increased chance of attaining at least one bonus event associated with the bonus mode of play, wherein the trade does not affect payout odds of the standard mode of play; and

a processor configured to execute the trade by accepting a traded portion of the player assets, and in response increasing the odds for the player to attain the bonus event relative to the odds for the player to attain the bonus event in connection with the standard mode of play where no trade is executed.

38. (Original) The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 37, further comprising a display device to display a video representation of the bonus event during player participation in the bonus event.

39. (Original) The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 37, wherein the user interface further allows entry of at least a portion of the player assets to allocate to the trade.

40. (Original) The casino gaming apparatus as in Claim 37, wherein the gaming activity comprises any of a slot game, a poker game, or a keno game.

41. (Currently amended) A casino gaming apparatus for participating in a gaming event, the gaming event having an associated bonus activity made available to the player upon particular gaming occurrences of the gaming event, the casino gaming apparatus comprising:

means for receiving an indication to trade player assets for altering the odds of being presented with the bonus activity without the trade affecting payout odds of a standard gaming activity with which the bonus activity is associated;

means for receiving an identification of a trade value offered by the player, wherein the trade value comprises at least a portion of the player assets;

means for executing the trade;

means for providing altered odds of attaining the bonus activity to the player when attaining the bonus activity would otherwise be subject to lesser odds when available through participation in the gaming event; and

means for providing a payout result corresponding to a result of the player participation in an attained bonus activity.

42. (Currently amended) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for facilitating participation in a gaming activity that includes at least a standard gaming activity and at least one bonus activity, the computer-executable instructions performing steps comprising:

receiving an indication to trade player assets for an increased chance of being awarded a bonus activity relative to the chance of being awarded the bonus activity during participation in the standard gaming activity without the trade affecting payout odds of the standard gaming activity;

receiving an identification of a trade value offered by the player, wherein the trade value comprises at least a portion of the player assets; and

executing the trade by accepting the trade value offered by the player and presenting the player with the increased chance of being awarded the bonus activity.

43. (Original) A method for facilitating participation in a gaming activity event having at least a standard mode of play and a bonus mode of play, the method comprising:

awarding an increase in the odds of receiving a bonus event through player participation in the standard mode of play;

receiving an indication to trade the awarded increase in the odds of receiving the bonus event for a payout amount; and

executing the trade by disallowing the increased chance of participating in the bonus event, and awarding the payout amount to the player.